

PISD Secondary Curriculum - English/Language Arts 6-12
Review of SSR and Independent Reading Research Support

Allen, J. (2000). *Yellow brick roads: Shared and guided paths to independent reading 4-12*. Stenhouse Publishers.

“As these authentic experiences are nurtured in classrooms where students have access to diverse reading materials, students begin making the kind of choices we hope to see them make throughout their adult lives.” (99)

“The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (Elley 1992) reported that the most important factor in the development of literacy is access to books. The advantages seen when students have this access are significant in the reading development of students at any age. Many educators have found that extended time for independent reading affects reading fluency, world knowledge, motivation, and writing. Sadly, as students move from primary classrooms to middle and secondary classrooms and students lose or give up access to independent reading, many readers lose interest in reading.” (99)

Allington, R. L. (2001). *What really matters for struggling readers*. Longman.

“Replacing whatever went on in classrooms with added reading time was just as effective as, or more effective than, traditional instruction in enhancing reading comprehension performance.” (25)

“Neither oral reading volume nor indirect reading activity significantly influenced post-test reading performance. The analyses suggest that an increase of five minutes daily silent reading would be predicted to produce an additional month’s growth on a standardized reading achievement test.” (31)

“The research also provides evidence for what [Richard L. Allington] considers one of the greatest failures of the federally funded Title I remedial reading and special education programs: Neither program reliably increased the volume of reading that children engaged in (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Haynes & Jenkins, 1986; O’Sullivan et al., (1990). This failure may explain the limited impact that both programs have had on accelerating the reading development of the children served (Puma et al., 1997). Simply put, children who received extraordinary instructional support from either program often had the volume of reading reduced rather than expanded as remedial and resource room lessons focused on other activities....The consistency of the evidence concerning the relationship of volume of reading and reading achievement is surely strong enough to support recommending attention to reading volume as central feature of the design of any intervention focused on improving reading achievement.” (32)

Allington, R. L., & Cunningham, P. M. (n.d.). *Schools that work: Where all children read and write*. 1996: Harper-Collins.

“Authentic experiences begin with individual purpose and motivation. Authenticism is based on analyses of real world reading and writing where adults primarily determine what they will read and write and the level of involvement in the activities. As adults we decide which sections of the newspaper to read, which paperbacks to purchase, which manuals we need.” (90)

Anderson, C. (2000, November). Sustained silent reading: Try it, you'll like it! *The Reading Teacher*, 54(3), 258.

“Ideally, students are encouraged to read the materials of their choice. Teachers can provide a classroom collection of high-interest books and recycled popular magazines and newspapers. SSR is not the time to require the reading of textbooks or classroom assignments. One of the main purposes of SSR is for students to experience the pure pleasure of reading. Once the routine of SSR is established, students will begin to bring books and magazines from home or the library and will rely less on teacher provided materials. Sustained Silent Reading pays big dividends. Your students get better at reading, their test scores may improve as they practice reading more often, and, best of all, they learn to love to read!” (258)

Beers, K. (2003). *When kids can't read: What teachers can do*. Henemann. (Original work published 1999)

“The Commission on Reading, the group that prepared the report *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, found that teachers could pick up approximately two hours per week of time for students to read by spending less time of worksheets and workbooks. No one would ever expect the school football team to get better without actually playing football or the band to improve without actually playing instruments. But for some reason, many of us do expect students to become better readers without actually having time to read. The logic fails and eventually, so do students.” (199)

“Giving students time for daily, uninterrupted, sustained silent reading is critical. Studies show that giving students as little as fifteen minutes a day for SSR can impact attitudes, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.” (199)

Biancarosa, G. & Snow, C. (2006). *Reading next: A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. Retrieved November 10, 2010 from <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/ReadingNext/ReadingNext.pdf>.

“One way that motivation and engagement are instilled and maintained is to provide students with opportunities to select for themselves the materials they read and topics they research. One of the easiest ways to build some choice into the students’ school day is to incorporate independent reading time in which they can read whatever they choose. Yet this piece of the curriculum is often dropped after the primary grades.”

Birmingham, K. S. (2006). *The effect of sustained silent reading on high school students’ lexile scores and attitudes toward reading* (Unpublished master’s thesis). Wichita State University, Wichita, KA.

“The results suggest in this experiment that there is a positive connection between SSR and as student’s lexile score. Furthermore, the results suggest that in this experiment SSR has a positive connection with a student’s attitude toward school and recreational reading.”

“In the experimental group, sixty-six percent of the participants increased their [lexile] score...What also is important to note that both the experimental and control groups were classes with special education students. Many of those mainstreamed, special-education students saw an increase in their scores. Specifically six of the ten special education students who participated in SSR raised their [lexile] score.”

Brannigan, G., & Margolis, H. (2010, May 9). Can Sustained Silent Reading Help Children With Reading Disabilities? [Web log post]. Retrieved from Reading & Other Learning Disabilities: <http://www.reading2008.com//sustained-silent-reading-help-children-with-reading-disabilities.htm>

“If done right, sustained reading is important practice for children, an important way for teachers to communicate they value reading, a way of helping children become competent, motivated readers.”

“If children don’t regularly read lots of paragraphs, stories, articles, and books, they’re unlikely to become competent readers. They may learn to recognize words in isolation, but that’s all. They won’t learn the joy and importance of reading, or how to read anything more involved than simple sentences, like ‘Sam ate the ham.’ They won’t learn how to stick with, comprehend, critique, or discuss longer materials. Unfortunately, many schools drill students in recognizing words, but give them little opportunity to read stories and other lengthy materials, depriving them of important opportunities to learn to read and depriving them of the enjoyment of reading. Not giving students lots of daily opportunities to read

materials they like is like trying to teach them to swim without letting them go in water. It doesn't work."

"Reading specialists such as myself view sustained silent reading—reading that engages struggling readers in lots of easy, enjoyable reading of books they choose—as an important element of high quality reading instruction. Here are four related reasons: struggling readers need to compensate for an overemphasis on isolated skills...struggling readers need to do lots of reading...struggling readers need to do lots of easy reading...many struggling readers need programs that motivate them to read."

Burke, J. (2000). *Reading reminders: Tools, tips, and techniques*. Boynton/.

"If it is done right, SSR improves readers' stamina, fluency, and engagement. Teachers need to dedicate specific time to this activity and maintain that commitment." (4)

Bylut Ermitage, J., & Van Sluys, K. (2007, Spring). Reading, learning, relaxing, and having fun: Third-grade perspectives on sustained silent reading. *Illinois Reading Council Journal*, 35(2), 11.

"The two main reasons teachers use SSR in the classroom are (1) to raise student reading achievement and (2) to foster positive student perspectives toward reading." (11)

"A recent study indicates that during the past decade, the percentage of adults in America who do any type of book reading has significantly decreased. Similarly, a 2004 survey of 151 sixth and ninth graders reported that 92% of the students, who were distributed across ability levels, were categorized as Not-Readers, or those who seldom or never read for pleasure. This startling research suggests that while schools may be creating students who are capable of reading, most of them are not applying their abilities and do not value reading as a recreational activity...While teachers cannot create a home environment for each child that values and encourages reading, they hope that devoting time to reading during the school day will provide more students with an opportunity to have a positive, sustained interaction with different types of texts that may carry over into their life outside of school." (11)

Chua, S. P. (2008, March/). The effects of the sustained silent reading program on cultivating students' habits and attitudes in reading books for leisure. *Clearing House*, 81(4), 180-184.

"The percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed that reading books for leisure was pleasurable and enjoyable increased after twelve months of [SSR] implementation." (183)

"If students' reading behaviors during the SSR period were a result of the teachers' management skills, there would be no reason for the increasing numbers of students who

reported that reading books for leisure was pleasurable and enjoyable.” (184)

Clarke, B. (2006, February). Breaking through to reluctant readers. *Educational Leadership*, 63(5), 66-69.

“We have found that the teachers who motivate students to read independently are those who read themselves and who proactively talk with students about the need to read. If a teacher who has a solid relationship with a student models a love of reading, then that student is likely to read.” (67)

“Making reading assessments transparent and infusing concrete reading strategies into all classes is paying off for Blackstone’s students. The scores of our 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students who took the NWEA reading assessment in both spring 2003 and fall 2004 showed an average increase of nearly two reading grade levels.” (69)

Daniels, H., & Zemelman, S. (2004). *Subjects matter: Every teacher’s guide to content area reading*. Heinemann.

“Reading flows from intrinsic motivation (curiosity, wonder, pleasure, etc.), and is not driven by external rewards or punishments. So if we want this future to become reality to grow the community of lifelong learners around our schools part of every school day must be devoted to independent reading. This means students are picking reading materials and talking about it with their friends, kids acting like lifelong learners while they are still in school. It’s too risky to wait until they graduate and hope they develop good study habits someday, maybe.” (184)

DeBenedictis, D., & Fisher, D. (2007, March). Sustained silent reading: Making adaptations. *Voices from the Middle*, 14(3), 29-37.

“In this age of continued high-stakes testing as the sole way to determine if students can read, packaged programs for direct instructional reading are becoming the norm, and SSR (and its variations, such as writing and/drawing with discussion afterwards) as a means for developing reading fluency and comprehension are in danger of going by the wayside. This is of grave concern, since much of the research on SSR shows that gains are made in student reading achievement as well as in attitude towards reading, but these gains are evidenced over a longer period of time than what a typical research study allows.”

“Many research studies of SSR, whether quantitative or qualitative, have been process-product in nature, that is, they have attempted to show a cause and effect link between SSR and student reading achievement. Leinhardt, Zigmond, and Cooley (1981) studied 105 elementary learning-disabled students for reading achievement based on several variables

related to reading behaviors and instruction. Pretests and posttests were given, and observations and teacher interviews were conducted. They found that posttest performance was significantly influenced by the pretest and by silent reading, but not by oral reading or indirect activities. The results suggested that as little as five minutes a day of silent reading over 20 weeks resulted in an additional one-month growth in reading achievement.”

Fisher, D. (2004, October). Setting the “opportunity to read” standard: Resuscitating the SSR program in an urban high school. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(2), 138-150.

“The real test came when the administrative team members, by their presence in classrooms, ensured that students were given reading time. In addition, the principal, through his comments during staff meetings and inservice sessions, made the expectation clear—students should be given time and opportunity to read.” (149)

“Perhaps, as a peer coach and mentor teacher noted, ‘It isn’t enough to build literacy skills if students aren’t provided the opportunity to use those skills.’ By that, he meant that students need the opportunity to read books of their own choosing and they need time to do so. He also meant that simply reading without intentional instruction in reading is unlikely to change the literacy development trajectory of adolescents who have historically struggled to read.” (150)

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (n.d.). *Improving adolescent literacy: Strategies that work*. Pearson.

“Everyone in the school from the principal to the ninth grade students is provided time to read from books for other texts from their own choosing. As students watch their teacher model reading, they learn directly of the activities pleasure and importance. When students are allowed to choose their own reading, they inherent interest in the material itself fosters better reading habits and ability. With students spending more time reading, they become better readers and better readers become better test takers.” (179)

Foertsch, M. A. (1992). *Reading in and out of school: Achievement of American students in grades 4, 8, and 12 in 1989-90*. Washington, DC: National Center of Educational Statistics: U.S. Government Printing Office.

“Despite extensive research suggesting that effective reading instruction includes moving from an emphasis on workbooks to lessons that offer more extensive reading and writing activities, many children still spend inordinate amounts of time on workbook activities (which have no positive relationship with reading achievement).”

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2006). *Teaching for comprehending and fluency*. Heinemann.

“Just as it is important to read a variety of high-quality texts, quantity also matters. Reading is thinking grounded in text. From Kindergarten through eighth grade, students must do a lot of reading every day. The more texts you have read, the more information you have to

bring to your reading.” (xxvii)

“In the reading workshop, students engage in reading independently a book they have chosen. You systematically sample oral reading and conduct reading conferences in which you have genuine conversations about the reading. These reading conferences are highly productive both in terms of instruction and in providing valuable information for you (fluency, for example, or an appropriate minilesson). The conference can focus on anything the reader needs-making good book choices, thinking about reading, writing responses to reading, or solving words.” (xxvii)

“A classroom is intentionally structured to help students learn a specified body of knowledge, so some learning experiences of necessity are contrived. But, as much as possible, reading and writing in the classroom need to mirror the real purposes and types of texts used by readers and writers in the outside world. For example, students can choose books according to their interests. They can read to find information. They can develop and pursue favorite authors or genres. All of those functions are part of our daily lives as readers.” (xxvii)

“There are many times during the school day when your students will focus on how to spell a word, the relationship between letters and sounds, or the meaning of a word, but it is essential that they spend the bulk of their time processing continuous text. Their reading power grows only when they can orchestrate the systems of strategic actions needed to process a text effectively. They need a massive amount of practice solving words ‘on the run’ while reading for meaning.” (xxvii)

Free voluntary reading in schools. (1993, September). *Emergency Librarian*, 21(1), 33.

“Providing time for free voluntary reading in schools has a positive impact on reading comprehension, vocabulary development, spelling, written style, oral/language and control of grammar.”

“Sustained silent reading and self-selected reading are powerful tools for reading development; the longer FVR is practiced the more consistent the results. FVR is superior to direct instruction on tests of reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, and grammar. Several studies, for more than a century, show that FVR is the only way we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and become good spellers.”

“A print-rich environment, including larger library collections, and a good reading environment, including comfort and quiet, affect reading, literacy development and reading scores.”

“Children and young people read more when they are read to, when they see adults reading

and when they have access to a wide range of reading material, including magazines [due to reader-specific interest], comic books [typically more complex than adults realize] and teen romances [often 40-50,000 words per novel]. Light reading can and should be a conduit to more serious reading. ”

“These affects and results are even more important for English as a second language learners.”

Gallagher, K. (2009). *Readicide*. Stenhouse Publishers.

“Sustained Silent Reading time is being abandoned because it is often scene as soft or non-academic. For many students, academic reading, though incredibly important, has become their only reading. How would you like it if the only reading you ever did in your life was Shakespeare and Beowulf?” (4)

“SSR is actually a valuable investment in test preparation...SSR is necessary to allow students an opportunity to build their prior knowledge and background...SSR provides many students with their only opportunity to develop a recreational reading habit.” (42-44)

“When it comes to vocabulary acquisition, SSR provides the best investment of reading time...If those students who enter schools linguistically impoverished—thirty-two million words behind—do not read extensively, they will never catch up. This bears repeating: struggling readers who do not read voraciously will never catch up.”(43)

Garan, E. M., & DeVoogd, G. (2008, December). The benefits of sustained silent reading: Scientific research and common sense converge. *Reading Teacher*, 62(4), 336-344.

“There are many misconceptions about the role Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) should play in reading instruction. Much of the confusion stems from the research on SSR in the Report of the National Reading Panel (NRP; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000)...Given the lack of evidence as cited by the NRP, and given that the evidence the panel did use was weak and poorly designed, any conclusions that SSR does not benefit children cannot be a derivation of sound data. If the research is flawed, then so are any conclusions based on it. In point of fact, the NRP report itself did not draw any conclusions one way or the other about SSR.” (336-338)

“Once teachers unravel the facts from the misinterpretations and opinions, they will find that Sustained Silent Reading is not only intuitively appealing but also is supported by research.” (336)

“If we don’t allow students to read in school at the same time that we tout the wonders of

reading, what message are we sending to students about our values?”

“If reading is not worth doing in school, then it’s not worth the sacrifice of family time at home either. Our society values books. Certainly, it would be a betrayal of those values if we did not promote or allow real books and real reading in schools.” (341)

“Although some students come to school already familiar with books, many do not. For them, some intervention by and interaction with the teacher during SSR can provide the kind of modeling they’ve missed at home with their parents.” (342)

“As literate and literature-loving adults, teachers can scaffold children by providing an important middle step between total dependence on the teacher and true independent reading.” (342)

“The body of evidence on SSR reveals an alignment of research with what the professional judgment of many teachers has determined—Sustained Silent Reading benefits students, and so we see that SBRR [scientifically based reading research] and common sense converge.” (343)

Gardiner, S. (2001, October). Ten minutes a day for silent reading. *Educational Leadership*, 59(2), 33.

“Sustained silent reading programs do more than improve students’ attitudes towards reading. Studies show that students who enjoy reading also read more books and develop better skills in reading comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary.” (33)

Gardiner, S. (2005, October). A skill for life. *Educational Leadership*, 63(2), 67-70.

“We write learning objectives, create computerized reading programs, and schedule day-by-day instruction, but we often ignore the fact that human beings most frequently succeed at activities they enjoy.” (67)

“We don’t need to spend a lot of money or design complicated programs to help students learn to enjoy reading; we just need to give them time to learn that reading can be enjoyable. When that component is in place, students will not only score high on state accountability and college placement tests but also develop the attributes of what I call good adult readers.” (67)

“The good adult reader, who reads because he or she enjoys and feels successful at reading, becomes the model for how we approach the many reading problems confronting student readers.” (68)

“We must teach reading for enjoyment both in spite of and because of NCLB, Educators don’t have to choose between creating lifelong readers and

improving student performance. Sustained Silent Reading is the best approach possible for ensuring that no child is left behind.” (69)

Gardiner, S. (2007, February). Librarians provide strongest support for sustained silent reading. *Library Media Connection*, 25(5), 16-18.

“Through the course of a semester, my high school students will read an average of seven books each in the SSR program. That’s seven books of their own in addition to the novels, short stories, poems, and essays that are included in the regular curriculum.” (16)

“It is only logical that if students are enjoying reading, are taking pride in finishing books, are sharing those books with friends, and are spending more of their own free time involved in reading, their literacy skills and corresponding test scores will increase.” (16)

“Students who spend time silent reading regularly learn how the language is used and become comfortable with language issues. They learn to know intuitively whether words are spelled correctly, whether grammatical expressions are used appropriately, and whether meaning is evident in their own writing and reading.”(16)

“These booktalks also introduce students to the library staff and make them feel more comfortable with the people and processes involved in the library.” (17)

Gordon, C. (2010, November). Meeting readers where they are. *School Library Journal*, 56(11), 32-37.

“While passive activities create interest in reading, and possibly motivation, they are more effective when balanced with active reading through sustained silent reading. Those who participate in sustained silent reading programs show clear increases in the amount of free reading they do outside of school, and the effects appear to last years after the program ends. Despite these findings, sustained silent reading has declined in schools.”

“Reading motivation programs that use competition and artificial measures of reading success, such as point systems, distort the reason for reading. They rob students of free choice by shifting the focus from what they want or like to read to what will earn them more points.”

“Since low achievers typically do not read voluntarily outside of school, most of their reading is mandated. These students express anger and defiance, as indicated by survey data. In many cases, low achievers don’t really hate to read--they hate to be told what to read.”

“Free voluntary reading (FVR) is not only conducive to reading motivation, it actually works better than direct instruction... In fact, young people who read have better

comprehension, research tells us, and they write better, spell better, improve their grammar, and increase their vocabulary.”

“Students who have more time for recreational reading demonstrate more academic gains in reading than ‘comparison students.’ A lack of reading practice results in a decline in reading ability.”

Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). *Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools-a report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Retrieved from Alliance for Excellent Education website: <http://carnegie.org/////pdf>

“This negative effect was small, but it was statistically significant, indicating that traditional grammar instruction is unlikely to help improve the quality of students’ writing. Studies specifically examining the impact of grammar instruction with low-achieving writers also yielded negative results (Anderson, 1997; Saddler & Graham, 2005).”

Graves, M. (2006). *The vocabulary book*. Teachers College Press.

“In promoting students’ incidental word learning through reading... Whether you call it DARE (Drop Everything and Read), SSR (Sustained Silent Reading), or USSR (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading), some sort of ongoing, structured, long-term, in-school, silent reading program is a necessity for students who do not read outside of school.” (40-42)

Hall, C., & Coles, M. (1997, March). Gendered reading: Helping boys develop as critical readers. *Gender & Education*, 9(1), 61-68.

“By taking insufficient account of this voluntary reading, school reading programs miss opportunities to help boys develop their reading of the sorts of challenging factual texts they often prefer.”

“If girls seem to demonstrate being comfortable and in tune with school expectations, one of which will be a strong interest in literacy activities, then older boys may in part be reacting against the contexts for reading. There are practical ways of altering these contexts: many teachers could take children’s voluntary reading choices more seriously, they could broaden definitions of what counts as being ‘a good reader’ by careful analysis of what readers can, rather than what they cannot do, and they could work with pupils to help them see the kind of reader they are and to make choices about the kind of reader they would like to become.”

“It is to suggest that all pupils can be taken forward in their reading habits and understanding if they are encouraged to take a critical perspective on their own reading diet, and if they are helped to see how as readers they are constructed by the culture. This might

happen, for instance, if pupils were asked to reflect on their own reading histories and how they had come to have the tastes they have, or if there were more discussion in classrooms about how children might negotiate their own paths through the rampant consumerism or the moral and ethical issues which are raised in and by their magazines; or if there was more recognition within the reading curriculum that reading magazines might not be a light and trivial pursuit, but might assist a reader in becoming more skilled or discerning.”

“To improve (particularly boys’) reading, a curriculum designed specifically to improve boys’ attitudes to and involvement in reading is required. There is a need for positive teaching of individual reading based not just on differences in ability but on recognition of other differences between pupils as well, a most significant one being gender differences.”

Harvey, S. (1998). *Nonfiction matters: Reading, writing, and research in grades 3-8*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

“Listening to tapes and listening as teachers and partners read gets information to less proficient readers: it doesn’t replace the need they have to be able to read text. Teachers must set aside extended periods of time in which less proficient readers can practice reading text.” (87)

Harvey, S., & Daniels, H. (2009). *Comprehension and collaboration: Inquiry circles in action*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

“Avid readers keep increasing their reading volume as they move up the grades, while reluctant readers actually read less. So the gap between successful and unsuccessful students widens as a direct result of how much they read. We need to build in significant time for kids to read, just plain read. No matter what the grade level, kids need to be reading texts they can and want to read in school every day.”

Harvey, S., & Goudvis, A. (2000). *Strategies that work*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

“We get better at reading by reading. Richard Allington (1994) notes that American students spend less than 10 percent of the school day engaged in actual text reading. If we want students to think when they read, we need to give them time.”

“Showing our thinking and the mental processes we go through when we read gives students an idea of what thoughtful readers do. We explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies by demonstrating them for students before turning the task over to them.”

“We need to build in time for readers to practice specific strategies in texts they choose. Much of the reading done outside of school is self-selected. We need to provide a wide

variety of accessible text so that all kids can find a book they are able to and care to read.”(30)

Haycock, K. (2005, February). Reading for pleasure. *Teacher Librarian*, 32(3), 34.

“Children who are readers will develop at least acceptable levels of literacy. Without a reading habit, children simply do not have a chance. Well-read people write well because they have subconsciously acquired good writing style. Free voluntary reading of self-selected reading material is a critical component of any effective reading program.”

“We have confused cause and effect. Skill acquisition does not lead to reading; reading for meaning, about things that matter to us, causes literate language development.”

Hebert, S. C. (2006). Does SSR work? Ask the kids! *Reading Today*, 24(1).

“What is it we, as teachers, want them to know and be able to do as a result of daily sustained silent reading? Explaining to students that daily time is provided so that they can become better, faster readers is a good way to assist them in ‘owning’ the experience of SSR. If kids understand why SSR is important and if they are provided with a wide variety of books and materials in their own “living book box,” we might find that this is actually an effective literacy practice, worthy of our time and attention.” (17)

Humphrey, J., & Preddy, L. B. (2008, March). Keys to successfully sustaining an SSR program. *Library Media Connection*, 26(6), 30.

“Make reading and SSR time a constant and natural part of the school day. Building-wide SSR time should be considered sacred and never interrupted or replaced by other activities, except in an emergency. If built-in SSR time is replaced in order to complete a classroom activity, survey, or test, it will be detrimental to students’ reading attitudes. Students will begin or continue to consider reading an unimportant and replaceable activity because that will be the message conveyed.” (30)

“The success of SSR as an ongoing instructional practice is enhanced with the support of grade-level, building, and district administration. Administrators show support through verbal encouragement, supporting training opportunities, getting involved in and permitting school-wide reading programs and events, enlisting the advice and assistance of reading experts in their building and school district, keeping SSR in the building’s long-range plan, and establishing a building SSR/Committee, as well as providing that committee with ongoing support.” (30)

“Young adolescent reading skills need to be taught and practiced, and SSR is one proven way to provide reading practice... With the use of key SSR strategies, students will be in a better position to be successful readers.” (30)

Keene, E. O. (2007). *Mosaic of thought: The power of comprehension strategy instruction*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

“There should be times when children read independently for the pleasure of reading, and there should be times when they are asked to employ strategies to deepen and amplify their understanding.” (33)

“Two factors are vital: providing time to read and time to talk. Both are critically important in creating effective classrooms, and anything that interferes with them needs to be changed.” (38)

“That we must give children the chance to read more therefore seems a most common-sense conclusion. Anything that stands in the way of allowing time to practice reading is a serious problem.”(39)

Kelley, M. J., & Clausen-Grace, N. (2009, December). Facilitating engagement by differentiating independent reading. *Reading Teacher*, 63(4), 313-318.

“Make sure you have reading materials they want to read. Knowledge of their interests and reading levels and a familiarity with children’s books will guide you in assisting students with text selection. Do not limit text selection based on Accelerated Reader or Lexile levels.”

“Consigning independent reading to an at-home task may perpetuate the less engaged readers described in this article, and could unintentionally move some engaged readers down the continuum of engagement.” (318)

Kittle, P. (2008). *Write beside them: Risk, voice, and clarity in high school writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

“I read along with students most of the time...it is essential that reading is just silent some of the time. Long ago at a conference I was reminded that the teacher may be the only adult the student has ever seen reading. Think about that. If at home the TV is always on and there aren’t any books nearby, this is possible.” (71)

Krashen, S. (1993). *The power of reading: Insights from the research*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

“In 93 percent of the reading comprehension tests comparisons students who were

assigned more reading or allocated more reading time in school performed as well or better than students who did not have the added reading assigned or that added time allocated. In the nine studies that were of a year or more duration, eight found positive achievements effects, one found no significant difference, and no studies found an achievement advantage for students in the traditional, control classes.”

“In-school free reading programs are consistently effective. In 51 out of 54 comparisons (94 percent), readers do as well as or better than students who were engaged in traditional programs.” (2)

“Reading as a leisure activity is the best predictor of comprehension, vocabulary, and reading speed...Kids who do the most recreational reading become the best readers...Free Voluntary Reading results in better reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical development.” (5-16)

“Free voluntary reading results in better reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical development.” (12)

Krashen, S. (2001). Is in-school free reading good for children? Why the National Reading Panel report is (still) wrong. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(6), 444-447.

“[SSR Programs] set aside time to make sure children have a chance to read, provide access to good books, and do things that encourage reading. I strongly suspect that that ‘just letting kids read’ is better than many kinds of instruction, but SSR does more than that.”

“Concerning ‘easy books’: Easy books can do readers a lot of good. First, what looks easy isn’t always so easy. If a reader who reads at the sixth grade level reads a book that is ‘officially’ at the fourth grade level, that book will still contain a substantial amount of language at or above the student’s level. Reading level is an average... Second, an easy book can provide the taste and background knowledge that will lead to and facilitate reading other books. Third, readers don’t stick to light and easy reading – their reading tastes gradually develop (LaBrant, 1958). In addition, it has been argued that reading has to feel effortless for it to result in language development; studies indicate that a text needs to be about 98% comprehensible in order for it to help the reader acquire new vocabulary (Hu and Nation, 1995).”

“The way all of us improved in reading was extensive reading of texts that did not necessitate strain and suffering, and that were so interesting we were completely absorbed in the message. Delayed gratification is not necessary to learn to read and to improve in reading.”

Krashen, S. (2006, September). Free reading. *School Library Journal*, 52(9), 42-45.

“Free voluntary reading, or reading because you want to, is the kind of recreational reading that most mature readers do most every day. In schools, this approach is often called sustained silent reading, or SSR. Although some educators and parents think that students who read for pleasure are “merely enjoying themselves,” there’s a huge amount of research that supports the importance of free voluntary reading. In fact, research strongly suggests that free reading is the source of our reading prowess and much of our vocabulary and spelling development, as well as our ability to understand sophisticated phrases and write coherent prose.” (43)

“Is free voluntary reading the only program students will ever need to become accomplished readers? No. But research has shown that children who don’t read for pleasure have an extremely tough time developing the language and literacy competencies necessary to succeed in today’s world.” (43)

“Research has also shown that SSR is at least as effective as conventional teaching methods in helping children acquire those aspects of reading that are measured by standardized tests, and pleasure reading provides a great deal that these tests don’t measure. Study after study has confirmed that those who read more know more about a wide variety of topics. Plus, according to both students and teachers, SSR is a much more pleasant approach than regular skill-building instruction.” (43)

“The most negative research result one comes across is that some SSR and comparison groups make the same gains.” (43)

“The National Reading Panel (NRP) report devoted only about six of its 600 pages to recreational reading, declaring that just 14 studies met its review criteria...NRP reported that sustained silent reading was better than traditional instruction in four of those studies, and there was no difference in the remaining 10. That’s not a negative finding—it simply shows that SSR is as good as traditional instruction and, at times, superior.” (44)

“NRP’s report is seriously flawed. For instance, it overlooked many studies of effective, long-term SSR programs as well as the importance of recreational reading for students in English as a Second Language classes.”(44)

“At first, parents and some administrators were concerned that these children wouldn’t do well on tests. They needn’t have worried. Over the course of the studies—from one to three years—the free-reading students outperformed their traditionally taught peers on tests of reading and listening comprehension, vocabulary, oral language, grammar, and writing.” (44)

“Another key study that NRP’s report omitted was Fay Shin’s 2001 examination of the impact of a special summer program on struggling sixth-grade readers. Shin...used the bulk of her grant money to buy comic books and books from R.L. Stine’s Goosebumps series...The students did SSR for two hours a day, talked about their books among themselves, met with teachers for individual conferences, and also discussed selected novels, such as *Island of the Blue Dolphins* (Houghton, 1960) by Scott O’Dell. Another group of students followed the school’s standard language-arts curriculum. At the end of the sessions when students took the Nelson-Denny Test...both groups made the same gains on the vocabulary section. But those in the free-reading group did much better than their peers on the comprehension section, gaining more than one year after just five and a half weeks of reading. They also gained about five months on the Altos test of reading comprehension and vocabulary, while the scores of children in the comparison group declined slightly.” (44)

Krashen, S. (2009, May/). Anything but reading. *Knowledge Quest*, 37(5), 18-25.

“Only one method of improving reading ability really works: engaging in a great deal of interesting (better yet, compelling), comprehensible reading. Massive evidence supports this view, both in first and second language research.” (20)

“The research literature also contains a number of case histories, cases in which self-selected voluntary reading resulting in unmistakable improvement in reading and other aspects of literacy. These studies are ‘scientific’ in that there was no other possible source of the improvement other than reading.”(20)

“It remains mysterious to me why the obvious, most pleasant, least expensive, and probably the only effective way to improve reading ability, providing readers with interesting, comprehensible reading material appears not only to be the last resort, but is often not even mentioned.” (25)

Krashen, S., & McQuillan, J. (2007, October). The case for late intervention. *Educational Leadership*, 65(2), 68-73.

“To be sure, early intervention is effective in many situations. But educators can also achieve great success by paying attention to late intervention, and late intervention is done best when it consists of massive ‘free voluntary reading’.”(68)

“There is overwhelming evidence that free voluntary reading is effective in developing literacy. When such programs operate for a sufficient length of time and when interesting reading material is available, students who participate typically outperform students who don’t participate on tests of reading comprehension.” (68)

“For free reading to work, readers need easy access to books. Those with more access to

books read more, and those who read more, read better.” (68)

“Much research and many individual cases support the view that late intervention based on free reading can work for struggling readers, that there is no critical period for learning to read, and that improvement in literacy can occur at any age.” (68)

Krashen, S., Von Sprecken, D., & Kim, J. (2000). The home run book: Can one positive reading experience create a reader? *California School Library Journal*, 23(2), 8-9.

“Jim Trelease (personal communication) has in fact suggested that one very positive experience can create a reader, one ‘home run’ book.”

“Even more important, students who participated in sustained silent reading say they read more than comparison students six years after the SSR program ended (Greaney and Clarke, 1975)! ”

“Nearly all students said they enjoyed reading (216/, or 96%) Of these, 118 identified a particular book that first interested them in reading, a remarkable 53% of the sample.”

“One might expect fewer home run book experiences from the school with the most number of disadvantaged children, because poorer children typically have less access to books, but this was not the case.”

Krashen, S. D. (in press). Protecting students from the effects of poverty: Libraries. *New England Reading Association Journal*. Retrieved from http://sdrashen.com/_students.pdf

“Until poverty is drastically reduced or eliminated, school needs to defend children against the effects of poverty. This means providing nutrition, health care, a clean environment, and books. For policy, this means continued and expanded support for free/meal programs, increased school nursing care, and, of course, improved school and classroom libraries.”

“There is recent evidence suggesting that increasing access to books can not only help students enormously – it can even mitigate the effects of poverty on school achievement and literacy development.”

“In a study of about 70,000 15-year olds in 27 countries, Evans, Kelley, Sikora and Treiman (2010) reported that controlling for parental education, fathers’ occupation, and social class, young people in homes with 500 books stay in school three years longer than children in bookless homes. Of great interest is the finding that the effect of books in the home was about the same as the effect of parental education, twice as strong as the effect of father’s occupation, and stronger than the effect of standard of living, as measured by the GDP, or gross domestic product. In other words, the impact of access to books on school success is as strong as or is stronger than economic factors.”

“The four studies reviewed here show that predictors related to access to reading material are strong and consistent predictors of reading test scores. This confirms a great deal of previous research, cited earlier. The four studies also strongly suggest that providing access to books can, to at least some extent, make up for the effects of poverty on reading. As noted above, several studies confirm that children of poverty have little access to books at home or in their community; the school library may be the only source of books for these children.”

Leinhardt, G., & Pallas, A. (1982). Restrictive educational settings: Exile or haven? *Review of Educational Research*, 52(4), 557-578.

“Increasing the amount of silent reading volume is the most obvious strategy for improving reading achievement.” (622)

Macdonell, C. (2004, April). Making the case for pleasure reading. *Teacher Librarian*, 31(4), 30-32.

“If children start reading for pleasure, good things will follow. Reading comprehension will improve. Their writing and vocabulary-even spelling and grammar-will get better. In other words, readers who read for pleasure are on the road to success.”

“Most of our students speak English or French as a second even third-language. One of the best things our students can do to become fluent speakers of English and French is to engage in pleasure reading in those languages.”

“Picking up vocabulary through pleasure reading is 10 times faster than intensive vocabulary instruction (Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985). [An SAT tutorial student’s] time would have been better spent reading alone than memorizing new words with the help of expensive tutors.”

Make the connection: Sustained silent reading and recreational reading. (2008, March). *Library Media Connection*, 26(6), 5.

“Research shows that giving children enough time to read allows them to get past the sounding out and searching for meaning stage and become fluent. It also allows them to begin to enjoy free reading as recreation. The more they read, the better they comprehend and improve vocabulary and fluency.”

Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

“As we have seen, the logic underlying [SSR] is that it incidentally increases vocabulary. Another rationale for this approach is that if students are ever to become proficient

independent readers, they must break from the heavily scaffolded and structured reading activities commonly used in their class work.” (139)

Marzano, R. J. (2004). *Building background knowledge for academic achievement: Research on what works in schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

“For students in which SSR was used for more than a year the estimated effect size was .87. To interpret this, consider two students who are both at the 50th percentile in terms of their comprehension ability. One student is placed in an SSR program that lasts for more than a year and the other student is not. At the end of that period, the student who has gone through the extended SSR program will be at the 81st percentile and the student who did not will remain at the 50th percentile.” (43)

“I recommend 20-30 minute sessions at least twice per week, and ideally more. Additionally, students should experience some version of SSR at every grade level through grade 10.” (52)

McCardle, P., & Chhabra, U. (Eds.). (2004). *The voice of evidence in reading research*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes. (Reprinted from *Motivating students to read*, by J. Guthrie)

“Research confirms that the amount of time spent reading is the main determinant of reading achievement.”

McEwan, E. (2001). *Raising reading achievement in middle schools and high schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

“The International Reading Association’s position statement on adolescent literacy sets forth the following benchmarks...Adolescents deserve access to a wide variety of reading material...time spent reading is related to reading success...time spent reading is associated with attitudes toward additional reading...time spent reading is tied to knowledge of the world.” (4)

“Identifying and nurturing the context variables that genuinely motivate students to become engaged readers, rather than students who merely pretend to read is a critical task for administrators. These variables include (a) the right kind of teachers, (b) the skills to read with confidence and success, (c) the right kind of books, (d) opportunities for directed and focused silent reading during the school day, (e) the promotion of books by every classroom teacher, and (f) superior library-media services.” (81)

“Carol Jago (2000) has finally come to grips with the reality of the high school schedule and the lives of contemporary teenagers. She wishes she could assign 30 pages for homework...but such is not the case. So she allocates 75 minutes of her 275 instructional-

minute week to silent reading of the texts under consideration.” (89)

“As the instructional leader, you must instill and nurture the beliefs and values that support a reading culture.” (94)

Methe, S. A., & Hintze, J. M. (2003, Spring). Evaluating teacher modeling as a strategy to increase student reading behavior. *School Psychology Review*, 32(4), 622.

“SSR is a culturally important behavior and a socially desirable educational practice. As an intervention to increase SSR, teacher modeling appears to be practical and cost-effective.” (622)

Miller, D. (2010, March). Becoming a classroom of readers. *Educational Leadership*, 67(6), 30-35.

“Many students identified as struggling readers early in their educations continue to receive reading intervention and tutoring throughout their school lives, never catching up with their peers. No matter what instructional methods we employ, students must spend substantial time applying the reading skills and strategies we teach before they develop reading proficiency.” (31)

“Lifelong readers possess certain habits that we can explicitly model and teach our students. By redesigning our classrooms to support young readers as they practice and internalize the behaviors of avid readers, we can increase our students’ engagement in reading and reap the benefits that prolific reading engenders.” (32)

“Maximizing wasted moments in the school day may garner as much as an hour each week of reading time for students, but we can allocate more reading time by eliminating warm-ups and ‘when you are done’ activities.” (32)

“Students can gain as much as 20 minutes of extra reading in class each day when teachers designate reading as the only activity for any class time not used for instruction and practice.” (33)

“Students’ background knowledge, understanding of text structure and features, vocabulary usage, appreciation for authors’ craft, and performance on a wide array of assessments improve tremendously because of the reading they do. For it is only through volumes and volumes of reading that many students internalize the comprehension skills and gain the reading experience they must acquire for academic success.” (35)

Moser, A. (2006, October). Sustained Silent Reading. *School Library Media Activities Monthly*, 23(2), 43-44.

“Too often it seems that reading in the classroom is a means only to an end and the student reads only to gain information on a certain topic. The joy of the process of getting that information, essentially reading, is overlooked in the hurry to complete assignments and ‘check things off a list’.”

“Despite criticism, SSR has proven to be an effective tool in today’s classrooms. One of the most recent attacks against SSR was the National Reading Panel Report on Fluency, stating that research: ‘...has not yet confirmed whether independent silent reading with minimal guidance or feedback improves reading achievement and fluency...research suggests that there are more beneficial ways to spend reading instructional time than to have students read independently in the classroom without instruction’ (2001, 3-1).

“However, critics of this report, including National Reading Panel (NRP) members themselves, immediately spoke out against the methods used to make such statements and have since written several articles debunking the argument that there is a lack of research supporting SSR.”

National Council of Teachers of English. (2008, August 14). *Guideline on expanding opportunities: Academic success for culturally and linguistically diverse students* [Position paper]. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org//>

“Research shows that culturally and linguistically diverse students can achieve academic success if appropriate strategies for teaching reading and writing are used. Effective teaching strategies are essential to the intellectual growth of all students, but they are especially critical to the success of linguistically and culturally diverse students.”

“Replace isolated series of discrete skill exercises and drills with actual readings by: providing frequent opportunities for silent reading; reading aloud frequently to allow students to become familiar with and appreciate the sounds and structures of written language; recognizing that first- and second-language growth increases with abundant reading and writing. Use classroom writing as valid reading material. Increase students’ understanding of reading materials by: encouraging student-centered activities and discussions; recognizing that experiences in writing can be used to clarify understanding of reading.”

National Council of Teachers of English. (2008, August 18). *NCTE position statement on reading* [Position paper]. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org//>

“In order to make sure that all individuals have access to the personal pleasures and intellectual benefits of full literacy, NCTE believes that our society and our schools must

provide students with:

- access to a wide range of texts that mirror the range of students' abilities and interests;
- ample time to read a wide range of materials, from the very simple to the very challenging;
- teachers who help them develop an extensive repertoire of skills and strategies;
- opportunities to learn how reading, writing, speaking, and listening support each other;
- and access to the literacy skills needed in a technologically advanced society."

Newkirk, T. (2009). *Holding on to good ideas in a time of bad ones: Six literacy principles worth fighting for*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

"The great dividing line between reader and nonreader may be more than what are considered skills; rather, readers know what it feels like to enter a state of engagement, and they want to reenter it as often as they can. The nonreader is mystified by the attraction of reading, having never felt it. It would seem to follow that the goal of reading is not the mastery of specific texts, but that of enabling students to enter the reading state." (116)

"Unless we can persuade students that reading is a form of deep sustained pleasure, they will not choose to read; and because they will not choose to read they will not develop the skills to make them good readers." (117)

"Students who read extensively will develop the fluency, word recognition, vocabulary, comprehension skills (and not incidentally) confidence needed for proficient reading in high school and college. Those who don't will be 'overmatched' and resort to shortcuts and coping strategies." (118)

Nichols, B. (2009, May). What does the research tell us about sustained silent reading? *Library Media Connection*, 27(6), 47.

- "The typical elementary school class spends less than 10 percent of its total reading instruction on independent silent reading.
- Surveys of elementary teachers indicate that fewer than half their schools incorporate SSR as standard operating procedure.
- Research has repeatedly shown a correlation between the amount of time spent reading and overall reading achievement, including vocabulary and fluency.
- Research on in-school free reading programs indicates that such programs also have a positive impact on grammar and writing.
- An analysis of 54 studies that compared schools with planned free voluntary reading to schools without such a program found that students in schools with the programs consistently did as well or better than students without such a program.
- Positive effects were found in 25 of the studies, with duration of the program having a direct impact on student achievement results.

- One study that found little difference in overall achievement found that statistically significant differences were apparent when students interacted with one another to discuss what they had read.
- Studies have found that students who participate in planned free reading programs (such as sustained silent reading) do more independent, voluntary reading than students who do not participate in such programs.
- One study that included a follow-up of adolescent boys found that the students who had participated in an extended free reading program were reading more six years later than students who had not participated in such a program.
- Studies that have analyzed how students actually use their time during sustained silent reading (SSR) have found that 90 percent or more of the students were involved in reading.
- International studies comparing the reading skills of children in more than 30 countries found two consistent factors among those with the highest reading scores: they were students who were read to daily by their teachers and who read the most pages independently for pleasure.” (47)

Pilgreen, J. (2000). *How to organize and manage a sustained silent reading program*. Boynton/.

“Student enjoyment of reading can be fostered through a Silent Sustained Reading program.”

“SSR is considered one of the most effective means of improving students’ reading capacity at any grade level.”

Radloff, M. E. (2009). *Confronting the “100% proficiency” mandate: One school’s efforts through sustained silent reading*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

“A supportive school administration is critical. Although the Literacy Committee can assume the role of framing and implementing the program while providing on-going evaluation and support, nothing lasting can be accomplished without the direct support of the administration.”

“The only initiative that was new and consistent across the tested content areas and across the school was the SSR program. In seven out of the ten tested grades and content areas, scores increased by a larger percentage than during the previous two years. Most notably, nine out of ten tested grades and content areas increased scores after the implementation. The lone score that did not increase, Grade 11 math, remained constant. Half increased by 5% or more, two in excess of 15%.”

Research finding: The promotion of voluntary reading can be done best through the classroom teacher. (1995, March/). *Emergency Librarian*, 22(4), 33.

“Teachers who provide additional time for reading and sharing materials, and who create an environment for reading, increase library use by students. At the intermediate level, the groups and influences most affecting the choice of reading materials are: friends and peers; themes; information needs; teachers; librarians; family influences; book orders and gifts; favorite authors; television and movies. At the secondary level, students are most influenced to use nonrequired materials through teacher recommendation. The teacher’s attitude also influences student attitude and the number of books checked out after a book promotion activity such as a booktalk. Teachers influence use of the public library as well: where teachers encourage use, students spend more time at the public library and engage in more activities.”

Reutzel, D. R., Jones, C. D., Parker, C., Fawson, P. C., & Smith, J. A. (2008, November). Scaffolded silent reading: A complement to guided repeated oral reading that works! *Reading Teacher*, 62(3), 196.

“In traditionally implemented SSR, teachers modeled silent reading and students were provided unguided access to books from home, the school library, or the classroom library. In SSR, students were allowed to choose any book available to them without consideration of difficulty levels. In contrast, in ScSR (Scaffolded Silent Reading) teachers explicitly teach students book selection strategies so they can select books to read that are at appropriate difficulty levels. Teachers guide students’ choices for ScSR by structuring their reading selections to include a wide variety of literary genres.” (196)

Reynolds, M. (2004). *I won’t read and you can’t make me: Reaching reluctant teen readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

“Over time I came to realize that the greatest gift I could offer my students, many of whom would have no further formal schooling after they left M.H.S., was the gift of a reading habit. Silent reading time became the backbone of my program.” (4)

“Several years ago the Los Angeles Times reported on the findings of a research study that showed the single most significant factor in determining a person’s success in life to be whether they read for pleasure. That they read was important--what they read was not.”(5)

“If you are buried in the muck and mire of mandates, it helps to remember that the practice of Sustained Silent Reading unquestionably leads to improved skills.” (6)

Robb, L. (2000). *Teaching reading in middle school: A strategic approach to teaching reading that improves comprehension and thinking*. New York: Scholastic.

“Allocating ample time for actual text reading, and ensuring that students are actually engaged in text reading during that time, are among teachers’ most important tasks in comprehension instruction--for both able and struggling readers (Fielding and Pearson,

1994).” (30)

“Reserving a block of time for independent reading is one of the most effective ways to improve reading.” (31)

“It’s the busywork, such as fill-in-the-blanks worksheets or copying definitions from a dictionary, that lures students to misbehave out of boredom or rebellion against nonmeaningful work.” (36)

Routman, R. (2003). *Reading essentials: The specifics you need to teach reading well*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

“Everything I do with teachers and students is based on an optimal learning model. When teachers understand and internalize this model, teaching and learning become more effective, efficient, and enjoyable. Teachers increase the time they allot to shared and independent reading and spend a little less time on guided reading.” (43)

“Tragically, many intermediate-grade teachers are dropping independent reading as a regularly scheduled part of their instructional reading program...Any reading program that substantially increases the amount of reading students ill do will impact their reading achievement.” (83)

“A longstanding, highly respected body of research definitively shows that students who read more, read better, and have higher reading achievement.” (85)

“We see that independent reading is not just another activity to add to your reading program but is the crucial learning context in which the reader assumes responsibility for applying smart reading behavior in order to gain and maintain understanding.” (86)

“Ironically, when teachers are pressed for time, independent reading is usually the first thing to be cut. Yet a carefully monitored independent reading program is the single most important part of your reading instructional program.” (87)

“Our students will not become better readers because we create fabulous projects and centers, give them lots of paperwork, and grade lots of papers. They will become better readers if they receive excellent instruction and have lots of time to read and talk about books.” (202)

Siah, P., & Kwok, W. (2010, September/). The value of reading and the effectiveness of sustained silent reading. *Clearing House*, 83(5), 169.

“Debate exists regarding the effectiveness of SSR programs in encouraging students to read on their own (Edmonson and Shannon 2002). Some studies have found significant

positive effects from launching an SSR program, such as a close connection between SSR and students' attitudes toward reading, and an improvement in vocabulary and reading skills (Gardiner 2001). However, other studies have not found these positive effects. A review conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000), for example, concluded that there was no clear evidence to support the claim that encouraging students to read more would improve their reading achievement. This conclusion, however, has been criticized as seriously flawed. Independent analysis of the results of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development study reveal that SSR is as good as traditional instruction. Among fourteen studies under review, four showed positive effects and ten showed no difference from traditional instruction."

"Some researchers and teachers have called for adaptations to the design of SSR programs to improve their effectiveness, such as removing the silence aspect (Parr and Maguiness 2005) and using the "R5" approach (read, relax, reflect, respond, and rap; Kelly and Clausen- Grace 2005). Nonetheless, through a contextualist lens (McGuire 1983), we can conclude that SSR could be effective in some contexts but ineffective in others. Thus, it is important to understand the conditions that enable SSR programs to be effective so that program developers can apply SSR to more suitable contexts to create the expected outcomes."

"There are many different SSR programs designed to improve students' reading habits and interests, such as Free Voluntary Reading (FVR), Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), Daily Independent Reading Time (DIRT), and Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR; Gardiner 2001). All of these programs share common features such as letting students read silently, freely, and without interruption."

"The SSR program is more effective for students who have a high value of reading than for students who have a low value of reading. Thus, in order to create significant impacts on students' reading attitudes and behavior during the SSR period, we suggest that schools that run the SSR program encourage students' parents to join reading activities frequently with their children at the same time. The more that parents are involved in their children's reading activities, the more positive their children's value of reading will be. In turn, their children will be more actively engaged in SSR and therefore more likely to enjoy and hold a positive attitude toward reading leisure books."

Strickland, K., & Strickland, J. (2002). *Engaged in learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

"Teachers should create reading times in class to show that they place value on reading and also expect students to continue this behavior on their own time, a reciprocal demonstration of value by the student. SSR...offers students the opportunity to discover reading for themselves and helps in reading enjoyment and motivation. Teachers can support struggling readers by creating an environment that brings comfort to reading." (63)

Sullivan, M. P. (2010). *Achievement effects of sustained silent reading in a middle school* (Doctoral dissertation, Liberty University, Lynchburg Virginia). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations database. (3397805)

“The purpose of this study was to determine the reading achievement effects of a schoolyear-long program of sustained silent reading in a middle school. Students’ scores on the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition across three years (2006, 2007, and 2008) were analyzed to test eleven null hypotheses...Through interviews, teachers reported the presence of up to eight traits of successful sustained silent reading programs. Results of a univariate ANOVA indicated that student achievement was higher in classrooms characterized by six or more of the traits.”

“The findings of this research study were not surprising. In keeping with the findings of previous studies, overall student achievement in reading was positively affected by a school year of daily SSR. Lagging test scores and the knowledge that students at the school “were not becoming readers” were the impetus for the administrative decision to implement SSR (L. Pinson, personal communication, 2009). Previous research indicating the benefits of SSR in improving student achievement led to the implementation of the program. Because student achievement increased, the program was deemed successful within the school.”

“Middle schools seeking to improve reading achievement should engage in a program such as this one which was conducted in addition to the curriculum, not as a replacement for reading instruction. In much the same way as athletes practice their sports day after day in preparation for the big game, in this era of accountability, students need daily practice in reading to be prepared for their big game, the standardized achievement test.”

“These findings support the inclusion of SSR as a daily component of the middle school curriculum. These findings further suggest that teacher training focused on the stacked for success traits of successful SSR programs could strengthen the program.”

Tariq, A. T. (2002). Ecological approaches to sustained silent reading: Conferencing, contracting, and relating to middle school students. *Clearing House*, 75(3), 154.

“In the age of Internet access and video games, students’ attitudes toward reading become even more complex. Finding good books to read is not a challenge--approximately thirty-five hundred new titles are published for children and adolescents every year-but it is a challenge helping students to start and finish reading a good book.” (154)

Trudel, H. (2008, December/). Making data-driven decisions: Silent reading. *Reading Teacher*, 61(4), 309.

“Silent reading can become more than a time to practice reading. It can be an opportunity for students to recognize—and celebrate—their skills as readers.”

“Researchers and authors from the past 20 years agree that students should be given the opportunity for self-selected reading. Skill instruction is not enough; students need time to read. Studies have shown that the amount of time a student spends reading natural, meaningful, and connected text (not necessarily self-selected) results in increased vocabulary knowledge, and overall reading and listening comprehension.” (309)

Wu, Y., & Samuels, S. (2004, May 6). *How the amount of time spent on independent reading affects reading achievement: A response to the National Reading Panel*. Paper Presentation presented at The International Reading Association Conference, Reno, NV.

“More time spent [free voluntary] reading had a significant effect on achievement compared to a control condition where less time was allotted for recreational reading.”

Professional Organizations that Support Sustained Silent Reading and/or Independent Reading Programs in Schools:



AASL - American Association for School Librarians



ALA - American Library Association



ASCD - Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development



IRA - International Reading Association



NCTE - National Council of Teachers of English



NAEYC - National Association for the Education of Young Children



NEA - National Endowment for the Arts

♣ NMSA - National Middle School Association